British Censuses 1801-2011: Traditional and Digital Preservation

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Structure of Presentation

- The creation of census data and the publication of statistics from them since 1801
- Preservation history of the original manuscript returns of the 19th and 20th century censuses
- Preservation history of the official digitized censuses of the late 20th century
- Issues of contextualization and metadata
- Digitization of MS census returns as a commercial venture
- Scholarly access to digitized census data
Early Census-Taking 1801-1831
Nominal Census-Taking 1841-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Person</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Smith</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jackson</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: This is a sample from the 1851 Census.*
The Big Bang of 1911

Figure A8.1. A portion of the occupational abstracting sheet for men, 1881
(TNA, RG 27/5, Item 73 – top right-hand section)
The Digital Census
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801-1831</td>
<td>in published form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841-1901</td>
<td>enumerators’ books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911 onwards</td>
<td>household schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931 and 1941</td>
<td>do not survive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preservation History of the Digital Census

1961 – 30% corrupted
1971 – 3% corrupted
1981 – 100% survival but some hot-decking
1991-2011 still live with ONS
Issues of Contextualization and Metadata

- Published Metadata
- Manuscript records
- HistPop (http://www.histpop.org/)
Access to the Manuscript Returns
Digitization of the Manuscript Returns
Scholarly Access to Digitized Returns, 1851-1911

- 1881 Census at the UKDA
- The Integrated Census Microdata (I-CeM) Project
Scholarly Access to the Post-War Digital Censuses

- SARs - 1991 and 2001 censuses
